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Typology of actions to improve cities' resilience

Introduction

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2. TYPOLOGY OF ACTIONS TO IMPROVE CITIES' RESILIENCE



The second section looks at actions cities can take to increase their resilience in the face of shocks and stresses. It seeks to identify best practices and innovative strategies in resilience, with a focus on four areas: cities that are greener and more liveable, partnerships, new approaches to urban planning, and accustoming residents to risk.

1. Greener and more liveable cities

In an attempt to increase their resilience, cities are increasingly committing to paying more attention to environmental and ecological considerations. A growing number of measures to cut CO₂ emissions are being taken, including city toll payments and reduction in the use of private cars, focus on public transportation and cycling, and expanding green spaces in cities. The city of Copenhagen, Denmark, has changed radically since the 1980s, from a city in decline to a city often ranked as one of the world's best places to live. As Copenhagen's Lord Mayor underlines in this issue, the aim is for his city to "maintain and develop its position as a green and liveable city," so that it stays attractive and consolidates its resilience.

2. Partnerships

Resilience is a multi-dimensional concept that impacts a broad range of fields. It is hard for territorial actors, and this includes economic actors, to act alone to boost the resilience of a territory. Partnerships are the key. The first public-private partnership was brokered by The Rockefeller Foundation in 2016 and signed by Veolia, Swiss Re and the City of New Orleans, following the lessons of Katrina. Laurent Auguste, a member of Veolia's executive committee, and Ivo Menzinger, from reinsurance specialist Swiss Re, talk about the goals of a partnership that aims to reduce exposure to risk of the city's water infrastructure and facilitate faster post-disaster recovery. The heart of this partnership lies in the complementarity between these two actors: Veolia is an expert manager of resources and infrastructure, and reinsurance specialist Swiss Re has been able to share its expertise in risk modeling.

3. New approaches to urban planning

The concept of the resilient city has seen the emergence of new ways of imagining and developing urban space. Whereas urban flows were long viewed as congruent with other "big flows," as embodiments of technical progress and constant growth, the rise of degrowth calls this dominant ideology into question. This is what architect and academic Hidetoshi Ohno does by developing urban projects in Japan based on "small flows," emphasizing small-scale city projects focused on delivering local solutions.

4. Accustoming people to risk

A city cannot be resilient without its residents becoming resilient too. Accustoming people to risk is an extremely important lever for creating the conditions for resilience and making risk prevention and management second nature. All too often, risk factors are grounds for anxiety, making it difficult to communicate with residents about the issues they may one day face. Grassroots initiatives like Hackers Against Natural Disasters, a French network co-founded by Gaël Musquet, have set out to use large-scale disaster simulation exercises to help teach people how to react if natural disaster does strike.

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